

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 23, 2003

The Honorable Judd Gregg
The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings
Chair and Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gregg and Senator Hollings:

We are writing to request an increase of \$51 million in funding for the Legal Services Corporation in the Fiscal Year 2004 Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. Additional funds are clearly needed to see that the doors of justice are open to those in our society who are unable to afford legal representation.

Legal services are in greater demand than ever, but the Legal Services Corporation has suffered serious reductions in federal funding since 1995. In 1996, Congress enacted a 30% reduction that forced the closing of more than 100 legal aid offices across the nation. From 1990 to 2000, the number of people living in poverty in the United States increased by 5.74%. However, LSC appropriations have not kept pace with this increase in the number of eligible clients. Every year, tens of thousands of eligible clients with critical legal problems are turned away because of their lack of resources.

An increase in funds for LSC is particularly important at this time when the number of persons in poverty is rising and state and local budgets are facing serious deficits of their own, because of the faltering economy. At present, no state is able to meet the current demand for legal assistance, and programs continue to turn away eligible clients with critical legal needs.

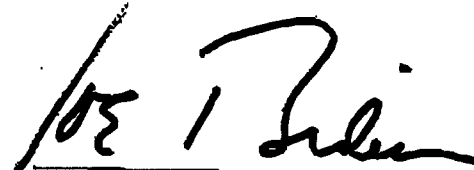
Funds provided by the Legal Services Corporation are indispensable to the 161 local programs serving every county and Congressional District in the country. LSC clients include the working poor, veterans, family farmers and people with disabilities. Their legal problems involve family relationships, domestic violence, health, employment, housing and many other basic issues, and the failure to resolve these problems causes even greater hardship for them.

Clearly, large numbers of Americans do not have access to the legal representation they need and deserve. Without an increase in federal funding, many more will be denied fair legal representation. We urge you to increase funding for Legal Services Corporation by \$51 million to help meet this urgent need.

Sincerely,



Edward M. Kennedy



Joseph R. Biden Jr.



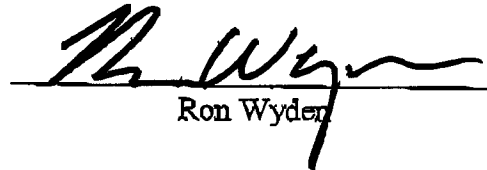
Paul S. Sarbanes



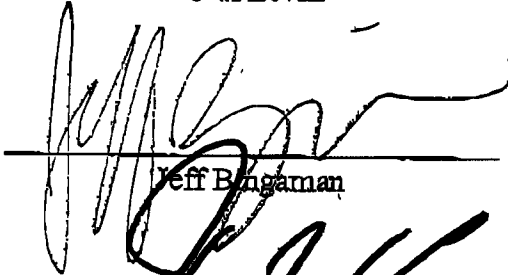
Patty Murray



Carl Levin



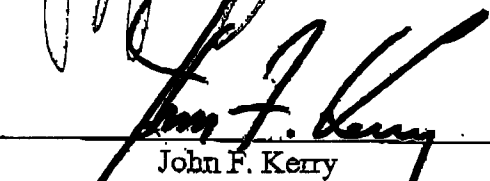
Ron Wyden



Jeff Bingaman



Richard J. Durbin



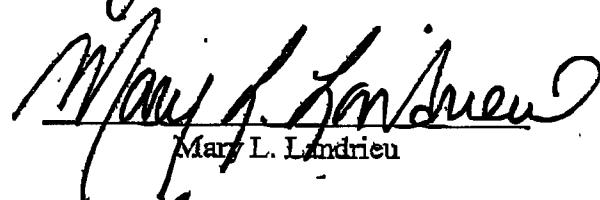
John F. Kerry



Jack Reed



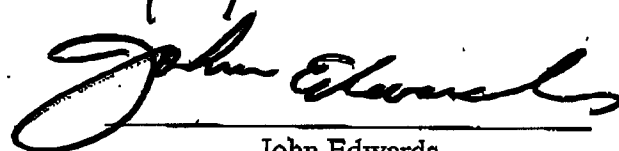
Tom Harkin



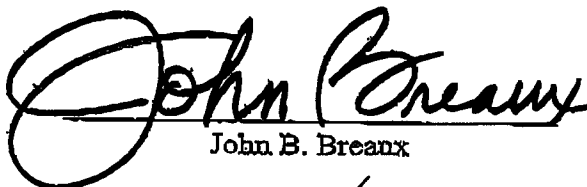
Mary L. Landrieu



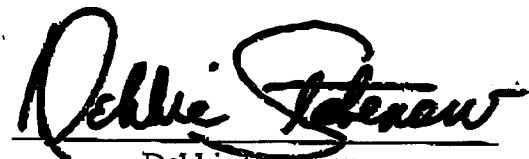
John D. Rockefeller IV



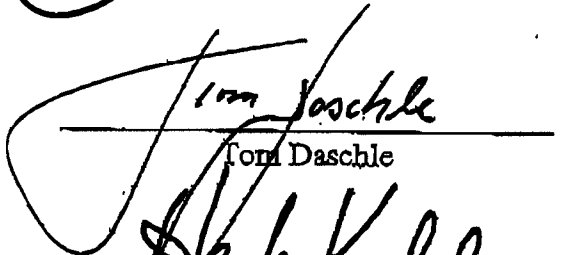
John Edwards



John B. Breanx



Debbie Stabenow



Tom Daschle



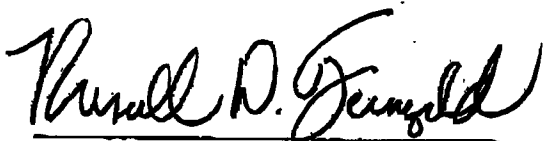
Maria Cantwell



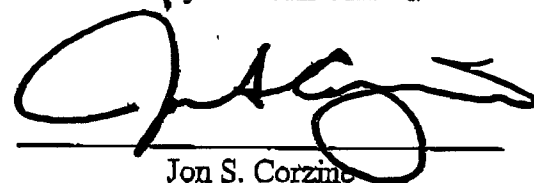
Herb Kohl



Hillary Rodham Clinton



Russell D. Feingold



Jon S. Corzine

Frank R. Lautenberg
Frank Lautenberg

Mark Pryor
Mark Pryor

Mark Dayton
Mark Dayton

Blanche L. Lincoln
Blanche L. Lincoln